

# **RTD NEIGHBORHOOD ECO PASS**

## **RESOURCE GUIDE**

*Last Update: 9/4/12*

## Introduction

The Neighborhood Eco Pass is an environmental alternative to single occupancy vehicles, a cost-saving convenience for residents and a great way to enhance community relations.

This is a discounted annual transit pass purchased by a neighborhood organization for all members of participating households. This photo I.D. pass entitles residents one year of unlimited travel on all RTD Local, Express, Regional bus and light rail routes. Neighborhood Eco Pass holders pay a \$2.50 fee for skyRide service to and from DIA. Eco Passes issued by DIA employers are exempt from this fee.

This guide has been created to assist neighborhoods in organizing an RTD Neighborhood Eco Pass program. Although each neighborhood can use its own unique style for canvassing neighborhoods, raising money, and creating materials, this guide gives step-by-step instructions on the basic tools needed to be successful.

## Eligibility

To be eligible a neighborhood must be represented by either a county or city government entity, or a registered homeowner/neighborhood association (applicant) and neighborhood must be within the Regional Transportation District boundaries. There must be designated individual(s) assigned as contacts for RTD and residents. Residents must be approved by the association and are eligible as long as they reside in the eligible neighborhood.

## Identifying the Neighborhood Boundaries

1. A neighborhood is comprised of a group of blocks. A residential block is defined as an area of land bounded on all sides by streets, roads, or one or more geographic or physical feature. Physical features can be lakes, rivers, railroad tracks, highways, parks, large open spaces of land, and neighborhood boundaries (i.e HOAs) or commercial areas. All blocks within the neighborhood boundaries must be contiguous: Definition of contiguous is:
  - a. Sharing an edge or boundary, adjacent
  - b. Connecting without a break, touching, neighboring.
  - c. Connected, uninterrupted.

There are two basic ways to enter into a Neighborhood Eco Pass contract with RTD:

- A neighborhood association can enter into a contract with RTD for the entire neighborhood with funding from association dues; or
- A city or county government entity representing the neighborhood can enter into a contract with RTD for the entire neighborhood. A group of neighbors can organize a volunteer effort to canvass their neighborhood door-to-door, raising funds to fulfill the contract amount.

Participation in the Neighborhood Eco Pass program requires:

- Representation of the community by a registered neighborhood association, or a city or county government entity. **A neighborhood association or government entity must be legally authorized to enter into a contract with RTD.** (see step 5 – Obtaining and Signing the Contract)
- A community appointed liaison, who will be responsible for providing all information required by RTD, coordinating the solicitation of households, and collecting funds.
- No contracts will be accepted for less than the \$7497 minimum contract. The contract minimum applies only if the per house hold price is less than the minimum. A survey must be completed to determine the pricing. RTD provides the survey to the coordinator for door to door distribution. The

potential neighborhood will be responsible for distributing the survey. RTD will also provide return envelopes.

## **Step by Step Guide to Organizing Your Neighborhood**

### **Step 1 - Neighborhood Planning Process**

Present the Neighborhood Eco Pass program to the neighborhood association or generate interest by distributing a flier in the neighborhood. The flier should explain the program concept and invite volunteers to participate in the organizing effort. Once interested neighbors step forward, host the first Neighborhood Eco Pass meeting to choose the neighborhood organization leaders (including the person who will be the neighborhood coordinator for the program administration), identify potential block leaders, and discuss strategy.

### **Step 2 - Identifying Neighborhood and Block Boundaries**

#### **Identifying the Neighborhood**

The name of the neighborhood and its boundaries are often determined by the initial home builder/developer. The neighborhood organization must obtain a map of the neighborhood from RTD. This map is an aerial view of the neighborhood showing the streets, blocks and the outline of each housing unit. RTD will define the minimum number of blocks required to establish a new neighborhood, and compute a unit price for the neighborhood. The price is computed from the survey results.

### **Step 3 - Program Kick-off, Block Leader Training and Implementation**

#### **Program Kick-off Meeting**

There are four things that should be known before the kick-off meeting:

- Neighborhood boundaries and blocks
- The RTD neighborhood unit price and contract total
- Names of potential block leaders
- Bus routes serving your neighborhood.
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At the meeting, the organization leaders explain the program to potential block leaders and distribute information, including informational fliers that the organization has prepared, block maps, and block sign-up sheets.

#### **Block Leaders**

The program relies on the hard work of block leaders who are responsible for qualifying the blocks in the program. Block leaders canvass their blocks, collecting money and registration information from program participants. The style of canvassing can be individual, different block leaders stressing different benefits to the program in their solicitation techniques. One block leader can canvass several blocks.

### **Step 4 - How to Raise the Money**

The annual cost of a Neighborhood Eco Pass is individual to every neighborhood and varies based on survey results using current ridership data. We look at service used and fare paid to determine the total revenue currently received from the neighborhood. The cost is the total amount of revenue divided by the number of households. The Neighborhood Eco Pass is a great way for an entire family to save on the cost of travel and for neighbors to make an impact on traffic congestion and air pollution. It does not matter how a block leader raises money. Every household or individual can contribute, or one generous neighbor can pay for the whole block. Contributions may vary depending on the level of motivation or the total number of contributions. Several of the more successful strategies that have emerged are:

- Individuals can be encouraged to contribute at a rate based on their projected use.
- The coordinator can determine an equal price for all individuals on their block by dividing the block price by the number of participants.

- The block leader may collect money based on the ability of an individual to pay.
- The HOA can also incorporate the price into the HOA fees.

**NOTE: All checks must be made payable to either your neighborhood organization or government entity, who will in turn pay RTD.**

### **Step 5 - Obtaining and Signing the Contract**

When the neighborhood is successful in reaching its goal, the neighborhood organization submits the following documentation to RTD.

- An alphabetical roster of each eligible resident with his/her address, and email address via email attachment in Excel.
- RTD will create the agreement. The agreement will be sent to either the government entity, or the HOA for signature.
- The government entity or HOA will sign the agreement and send it directly to RTD along with payment.

**NOTE: The contract must be signed by an authorized representative for the neighborhood. That would be either an officer of the association or a person that is legally authorized to enter into a contract for the neighborhood.**

### **Step 6 - Photo Session and Pass Distribution**

Photos can be obtained at any of our Eco Pass Service Centers during our regular hours. The coordinators also have the opportunity to upload photos to RTD directly. All forms and instructions will be provided to the coordinator once the neighborhood is established.

The coordinator and authorized block leaders are responsible for distribution of authorization forms and marketing materials to eligible residents.

### **Tips for Success**

You will need a lot of help. Take time to create an organization in which many people and/or teams of people will help share the load.

Appoint a neighborhood coordinator that is extremely organized. A second person that has good office skills is extremely helpful in assembling the database to create the required lists for RTD. Set strict deadlines. Keep them. Organize, organize, organize.

### **Renewal Process**

The renewal process is identical to the initial process, except that everyone will be more expert at canvassing and collecting money. A survey will not be required at renewal time. Neighbors will have an Eco Pass with smart card technology. The cards will automatically reload once RTD receives the rosters, signed agreement and payment.

### **Program Resources**

#### **RTD**

#### **General Information**

(303) 299-6000; <http://www.RTD-Denver.com>

#### **Theresa Rinker**

1600 Blake Street, Denver, CO 80202

(303) 299-2122; (303) 299-2600 (fax) [Theresa.rinker@rtd-denver.com](mailto:Theresa.rinker@rtd-denver.com)

\*Contact for agreement information, agreement pricing, map approval, photo sessions

### **The Agreement**

The Neighborhood Eco Pass Contract is a contract between RTD and the neighborhood or government entity acting for the neighborhood. **NOTE: The contract must be signed by an authorized representative for the neighborhood. That would be either an officer of the association or a person that is legally authorized to enter into a contract for the neighborhood.**

It specifies the number of blocks, residents, households, and the cost per household and the total dollar amount. It is used for new neighborhoods as well as the addition of new blocks to existing neighborhoods and is approved by the neighborhood association (or government) and RTD. The Contract lists the terms and conditions - eligibility, required documentation, payment terms, issuance of passes, adding additional blocks, confiscation of passes, lost passes or decals and how passes may be used.

It must be signed before photo passes can be issued.

### **Necessary Documents**

The complete list of documents required for participation in the Neighborhood Eco Pass Program are the Contract, the RTD-approved neighborhood map, the neighbor list, and proof of residency for each resident (supplied by the resident at the time of picture taking).